

Abstract

A memory system having multiple memory banks is configured to prevent bank conflict between access requests. The memory system includes a memory controller and a plurality of memory banks operatively coupled to the memory controller, with each of the memory banks configured for storing a plurality of data items. More particularly, a given data item is stored as multiple copies of the data item with a given one of the multiple copies in each of a designated minimum number of the memory banks. The memory controller is adapted to process requests for access to the data items stored in the memory banks in accordance with a specified bank access sequence. The minimum number of memory banks for storage of the multiple copies of the given data item may be determined as a function of a random cycle time and a random bank access delay of the memory banks, e.g., as an integer greater than or equal to a ratio of the random cycle time to the random bank access delay. The memory system is preferably operable in the above-described bank conflict avoidance mode as well as a standard random access mode. The memory system is particularly well-suited for use in an application involving an unbalanced ratio of read and write accesses, e.g., as an external tree memory for a network processor integrated circuit, but can also be used in numerous other processing device memory applications.